

## Printable View of: Group Assignment

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### File: Overview

#### Overview

Working in small groups of 3 or 4, your task for this assignment is to undertake a critical case study of a blended or online course or an online course environment. For the purposes of this assignment the BOE programme team have prepared four interactive cases studies of real blended or online courses.

We have also, with the generous co-operation the academic publisher Wiley, arranged live access to a small number of different subject-discipline sites in WileyPlus (Wiley's fully online virtual learning environment that combines traditional VLE functionality alongside text and interactive content to complement Wiley textbooks).

The general focus of the case study should be on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the blended or online approaches employed in the course or course environment (WileyPlus) that you look at, including what works well and possible future refinements.

The case study assignment will involve looking at two issues in blended and online education, one which you will select from a list set by the tutors and one of your own choice. The work to be submitted will be a case study report that should be jointly authored and presented by your group using a Wiki (which you will be sent an invite to).

To help facilitate effective group working, the first task for each group will be to complete and submit a Learning Contract that covers agreed roles, responsibilities, and other important issues. To support you in undertaking for this assignment, each group will work alongside Keith or Julia as their designated group tutor.

This assignment will be assessed through tutor assessment, and will account for 35% of the mark you receive for the module.

### File: Case studies

#### Case studies

Four course case studies have been identified for the purpose of this group assignment.

**Case A: DO2811 Animal Physiology** (predominantly classroom based with some online enhancements)

DO2811 Animal Physiology is a unit delivered by Isabel McKay at Lauder (now Carnegie) College. The unit has a mixed student cohort that includes school leavers and adult learners, and many students undertake the unit with a view to then going on to study for a relevant qualification at HE level.

The unit is taught in a classroom environment that is equipped with networked workstations, print resources, and conventional classroom teaching devices. Students attend weekly classes in this learning lab, where they are involved in various tutor-led, group and individual activities. The work that is undertaken in the classroom is enhanced through the tutor and students having access, via the institutional VLE, to relevant online National Learning Network (NLN) materials.

The tutor also uses the VLE to provide her students with materials she has used in classroom lessons, and other relevant web links. Although the students make use of online materials in the classroom, they are also encouraged to explore the NLN and other online resources in their private study time.

**Case B: LW32004 International Law in Contemporary Society** (blended campus-based module)

This module is taken by full-time year 3 undergraduates studying on the BA (Hons) Law and LLB programmes at Edinburgh Napier University. It ran in Trimester 1 of the academic year 2006/07, and although it had been delivered before this was the first time that the module was designed to be enhanced with technology.

The module introduces students to principles of international law with a particular emphasis on human rights and human rights protection systems. The tutor for this module, Jill Stavert, uses a blended approach that mixes lectures with collaborative classes and assessed online discussions, and which often involves students taking a lead in generating course content.

**Case C: AN22170 Veterinary Nursing of Exotic Species** (fully online campus-based module)

The module was delivered in Trimester 2 2006/07 by Mary Fraser for what was then Edinburgh Napier University's School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Care. The module was designed as a second year elective module for the School's BSc Veterinary Nursing programme, but is also offered to the programme's third and fourth year students. In this and other respects the cohort of 32 students was a mixed one.

Although the programme's students are campus-based, Mary developed and delivered AN22170 as a fully online module, and it was the first fully online module for the School's BSc Veterinary Nursing programme.

**Case D: BEHS361 Global Environmental Change** (fully online distance learning course)

BEHS361 Global Environmental change is an upper level undergraduate class that is a fully online distance education course offered by the University of Maryland University College (UMUC). The module has been delivered on several occasions by Christina Mainka, former lecturer and deputy programme leader for the MSc BOE.

The student cohort for BEHS361 is split between military and traditional students of different nationalities and geographic locations, and the main aim of the course is to hone critical thinking skills in relation to global environmental change and the issues that surround this. Although the course is an online distance one enabled through a VLE, there is virtually no online course content. Instead there is one core textbook and three auxiliary texts, and it is the activity within the asynchronous Thought Discussions that drives the learning process.

## Case E: WileyPlus Virtual Learning Environment (fully online environment providing access to WileyPlus textbooks and associated instructor tools)

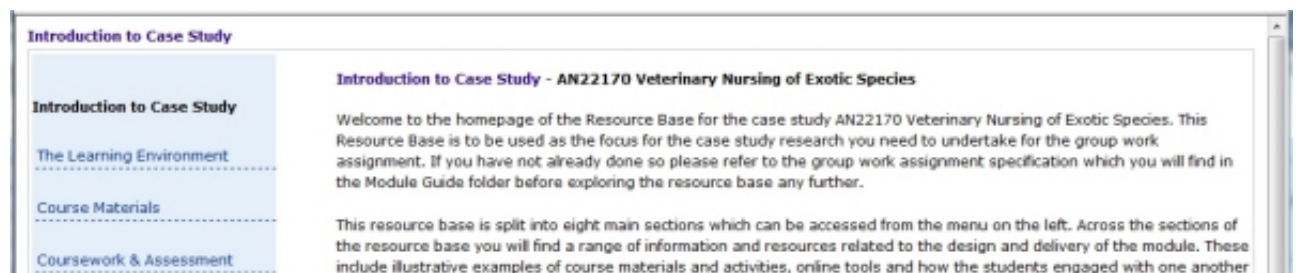
As part of a collaborative arrangement with Wiley this Trimester, we are able to offer IBOE and other MSc BOE participants live access to WileyPlus online resources in the areas of Physics, Accounting, and Anatomy. The intention on our part is to be able to offer an opportunity to access, evaluate and critique subscription-based online educational content, which will provide a good contrast with the open educational issues we also explore on the programme. The WileyPlus environments we have access to are also very rich in online assessment tools and interactive multimedia-based content including simulations, for those who are interested in exploring these particular areas. From WileyPlus' point of view, WileyPlus are interested in and open to how the professional educators on the MSc BOE will evaluate their provision.

If your group chooses to evaluate WileyPlus your report will be shared with the development team at WileyPlus as part of our reciprocal arrangement with them this Trimester.

### File: Resource bases

## Resource bases

For each of the case studies above, an interactive Resource Base of relevant materials has been prepared to provide a focus for your study. Each Resource Base contains an [interview](#) with the tutor in question, a virtual tour of the online and/or classroom environments, assignment specifications and other course materials, and additional resources as appropriate. The exception to this is the WileyPlus case study, for which you will be provided with live access to the platform and a range of the resources within it alongside background material explaining the design and pedagogic principles on which WileyPlus is based.



## Introduction screen to one of the Case Study Resource Bases

WebCT NAPIER UNIVERSITY EDINBURGH

My WebCT | Accessibility | Help | Log out

**LW32004 International Law In Contemporary Society - [TR1 A 2006-7 LW32004]**

**Course Tools**

- Course Content
- Announcements
- Discussions
- Learning Modules
- Mail
- Search
- Web Links
- Who's Online

**My Tools**

- My Grades

can answer then by all means do so. It is anonymous by the way! Jill Stavert

**Cases and glossary of terms wiki** (0 Messages )

Here is the link to the Cases and Glossary wiki. <http://fics.wikispaces.com/> If you go to Web Links you can access it direct.

**Nuclear testing: treaty status: Democratic People's Republic of Korea** (5 Messages / **5 New** )

Here's a question for you.

Given recent events in North Korea does anyone know the current status of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty? Who hasn't signed up to it yet?

Jill

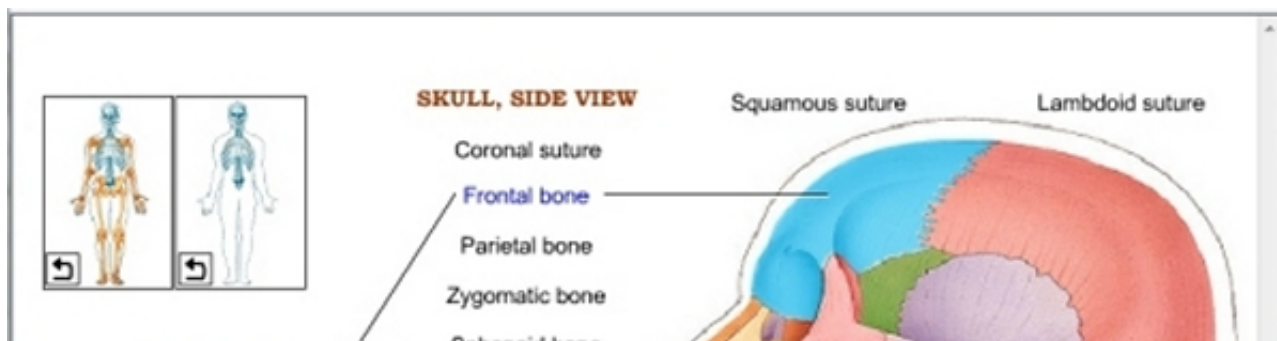
**Comments on Group contributions to the cases and terms glossary** (29 Messages / **29 New** )

Please use this thread to post your group's comments on the study group contributions to the glossary of cases and terms. By way of guidance, things you might wish to comment on are:- contributions to the wiki which you have found helpful and why; Anything else you would like to add (e.g. additional cases, definitions and acronyms, contributions to existing material there, etc) to the wiki and why; Items concerning international law which appear on this forum (e.g. on North Kor...[more](#)

**Lecture week 8, part two: Regional human rights protection systems** (0 Messages )

Hello there. As mentioned in the first hour of the lecture, please undertake the following exercise. It will be taken as

A narrated screencast will allow you to see how the online environment is used in a particular course



Example of the interactive educational content in WileyPlus

Once the membership of each case study assignment group has been confirmed in Week 3, the relevant case study resources and collaborative tools will be released to each group online early in Week 4, which begins Monday 26th September.

## **File: Selecting a case study**

### **Selecting a case study**

Everyone has a choice in which one case study they would most like to investigate. Although there is a bias towards science-based subjects within the courses selected for the case studies, each is very different in terms of blended and online teaching practice, and the identification of case examples that ranged from classroom-based to a fully online distance course or fully online course environment (WileyPlus) was deliberate.

Hopefully this should ensure that you are able to look at an example of practice in blended or online education that you are particularly interested in.

At the start of Week 3, the module team will provide access to an online form that you can use to indicate your order of preference in your choice of case study.

You will be asked to submit your choices online by Sunday 25th September. On the basis of your choices, we will try to make sure wherever possible that everyone is allocated either their first or second choice. Then, near the start of Week 4, the membership of each group and the case studies allocated will be confirmed.

## **File: Learning Contract**

### **Learning contract**

Once group memberships have been determined, each group will be provided with a template for a Learning Contract which you should use to detail your agreed roles and responsibilities, chosen issues, and how you will record progress, liaise with your tutor, and resolve any group working difficulties.

The Learning Contract is intended to help ensure that each group has a successful collaborative experience. The Learning Contract should be completed and submitted to your group discussion area by the end of Week 5, Sunday 9th October.

To help support you in undertaking for this assignment, each group will work alongside Keith or Julia as their designated group tutor.

This assignment will be tutor assessed, and will account for 35% of the mark you receive for the module.

## **File: Case study report**

### **Case study report**

On completing your case study research using the resources and tools provided, each

group will be required to author a case study report using the wiki that will be provided. Alternatively you are free to use another online collaborative authoring tool of your choice providing each member of your group is agreed.

## **File: General Format**

### **General format**

Your group report should be around 2,000 words excluding references. The report may include screenshots, links to relevant course documents, links to electronic journal papers or other online reference material that you cite, and any other figures, data, pictures or information that you think is relevant.

## **File: Core issues to be addressed**

### **Core issues to be addressed**

Each group should choose to address **one** of the core issues listed below as they relate to the case study in question. Please note that you may need to decide which particular angles to take when focusing on your chosen core issue, and you should consult with your group tutor if you need guidance here.

Course structure (this could include organisation of the course materials, structure and timing of activities, or blending of classroom and online elements)

Application of educational technologies (e.g. implementation and use of multimedia, communication tools, assessment tools, or other chosen technology)

How the tutor supports their students online (note that this will not apply if you group is looking at WileyPlus, where you could instead look at available tutor tools)

Learner autonomy (degree of choice and control learners have within the course or course environment)

## **File: Identification of key issue**

### **Identification of key issue**

In addition to the allocated core issue, each group should also identify one key issue that they feel merits particular investigation within the context of the course or course environment they are exploring. Possible ideas for key issues might include:

Retention

Achievement

Usability and accessibility

Comparison with previous non-blended or online version of course

Institutional and/or staff development support for tutor

Dealing with international cohorts

The student experience

Enhancing the learning and teaching experience through read/write web tools

However, this list is not exhaustive and it is important for your group to collectively discuss and identify a key issue you feel is relevant to the course, tutor and/or student cohort in question. Your group's tutor should be consulted once you think you have identified an appropriate key issue, or before this point if you feel you'd like some guidance on choosing between possible options.

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**File: Key elements of report**

### **Key elements of report**

The group report you submit should use a basic report format that includes:

- Titled sections with numbers (1.0, 1.1, 2.0 etc)

- A contents list at the start of the report (as you are producing a report in a wiki, or comparable online authoring tool, you should ensure the report is easy to navigate, e.g. section titles in your contents list could be hyperlinked to the correct sections).

Your report should also include a title page or header section that provides:

- An appropriate title for the report

- The words 'Group assignment submission 1 for EDU11100 IBOE'

- Alphabetical listing of group members

- The words 'Edinburgh Napier University 2011/12 Trimester 1'

In terms of your co-authored content, your group report should include the following information in addition to anything else that you think is relevant:

- Introduction to the report

- Overview of the course your group looked at

- Explanation and critique of the course in relation to the core issues

- Explanation and brief justification for the key issue your group selected

- Critique of the course in relation to the key issue

- Recommendations for future enhancements to course

- Conclusions



## Reference list (which should be formatted using the Harvard System)

Although the above will help give you some idea of what the general sections in your report might contain, and their order, you should structure the body of the report (explanation, critique, recommendations etc) as you see fit.

### Important Note

As you will be using open source tools such as a wiki to support your collaborative work you must ensure that back-up copies are made regularly of any work you produce and publish there.

## File: Submission date and procedures

### Submission date and procedures

Your deadline for the case study report is end of week 9 on Sunday 6th November, by the close of which the final version of your report should be presented within your group's wiki/equivalent.

A copy of your Case Study report in a Word or zipped HTML document should also be submitted via the appropriate group submission box by the deadline provided above.

**Reminder:** Remember to back up your wiki regularly as soon as you begin your collaborative activities.

## File: Assessment process and criteria

### Assessment process and criteria

Your work for the entire group case study assignment will be assessed to give you a final mark out of 100. The provisional mark your group receives for your report will account for up to 35% of your final individual grade for the module. All group members will receive the same mark for their group report (although please see the further advice in General Guidelines).

## File: Group report assessment criteria

### Group report assessment criteria

Your group report will be marked out of 100% against the following criteria:

1. Use of specified basic report format.....(5%)
2. Clarity of description of case study course and rationale for chosen core and key issues.....(20%)
3. Critical analysis including use of literature....(40%)



4. Recommendations and conclusions.....(30%)

5. Presentation and referencing style.....(5%)

The resources that will be released when the group work activity begins will include a copy of the assessment sheet with further breakdown of the above general criteria that will be used in assessing your group's report.

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**File: Group working support**

### Group working support

We will all appreciate that working in groups can be challenging, and this certainly also applies online. However it can also be very rewarding, and can provide a richer learning experience than working individually.

To help ensure that your collaborations on the group assignment are as rewarding as possible, please be aware of the following additional guidance and support options.

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**File: General guidelines**

### General guidelines

Once the tutors have confirmed that the groups have been determined, go to the Group Work area of the module site where you will be able to see who you are working with and what case study you will be tackling.

Contact your fellow group members (even if it is initially just to say 'Hi I'm here') via your group's private discussion area in WebCT immediately.

If someone hasn't suggested this already, try to identify some possible times you can all be online together at the earliest opportunity (ideally to meet in Elluminate).

Select a group chairperson to co-ordinate deadlines and assigned tasks, and who can liaise with your assignment group tutor to seek support and advice on group working issues including potential problems, and who can take responsibility for submitting the final group report.

Your text-based communications should occur within your group's private discussion board in WebCT where details of work allocated and decisions made can easily be viewed by all members, including your group's tutor.

Agree individual responsibilities, tasks and initial deadlines early on, mindful of what the assignment specification indicates the work requires.

Make use of each other's expertise and skills, and don't simply disregard an idea without due consideration. Proof read each other's work, and never re-write another's work without permission or having agreed editorial control.

**Please note that all members of the group are expected to actively engage with the**

**assignment task.** If problems arise in the group and it becomes clear that a group member is not making a sufficient contribution to the group task, the reasons for this will be explored with the group tutor with a view to agreeing a way forward. If an individual remains unable or unwilling to engage with the group assignment task, in consultation with the PDT and with the group tutor, that individual may be removed from the group, which may jeopardize their successful completion of the module. In the five times IBOE has run previously, this has only nearly happened twice so we don't anticipate any major problems.

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**File: Group working spaces**

### Group working spaces

In addition to a wiki, each group will be provided with their own ElluminateLive virtual classroom, a private discussion board within the module's WebCT site, and will have use of other communication tools including a synchronous chat room.

Any non-Edinburgh University tools used will usually require the group members to take responsibility for protecting their work from loss which group tutors will advise on as well.

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**File: Assignment group tutorial support**

### Assignment group tutorial support

Your assignment group tutor will be keeping an eye on each group's discussion area and can be contacted there for support at any time during your undertaking of the group assignment.

In case of problems that could impact negatively on your collaborative activities your group chairperson would normally be expected to e-mail the tutor on the group's behalf in order that the matter can be dealt with swiftly and sensitively.

In addition to the weekly Virtual Office Hours for the IBOE module, your group's allocated tutor will be readily available for Elluminate sessions with your group at key points and by arrangement when your group feels this would be useful.

If you choose alternative collaborative tools to carry out your work in you should also ensure your tutor has access to allow for your work in progress to be reviewed at an appropriate point (e.g. through submitting a draft report).

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**File: Timeline for completion**

### Timeline for completion

The following timeline summarises the key dates for this assignment, and suggests dates by which certain tasks should be completed or in hand:

**Sunday 26th September**

Deadline for submitting your case study choices

### **Week beginning Monday 4th October**

Tutors will confirm assignment group membership, and release the Resource Base for the allocated case study course to each assignment group.

During this week, your main tasks should be to assign group roles and responsibilities, timetable work, undertake an initial exploration of the Resource Base, and familiarise yourself with the group tools provided by the tutors.

### **Sunday 10th October**

Group chairperson to submit completed Learning Contract to group discussion board, along with a short update of initial progress in the first week of the group assignment.

### **Monday 11th October**

Undertake case study research including exploring the wider literature. By the end of this week you should be into the process of exchanging and discussing observations.

### **Monday 18th October**

During the 3 weeks beginning Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October you should undertake and complete the authoring and formatting of your group report.

### **Sunday 7th November**

Deadline for submission of group case study reports.

### **Monday 22nd November**

Assignment marks and feedback will become available this week.

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